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British government, since the æra of the revolution, under the construction of the statute commonly called the toleration act. Thus whatever may have been the letter of the law, the spirit of toleration has been extended, and large portion of religious liberty actually enjoyed.

Resolved, That we have beheld with great concern a bill lately brought into parliament, designed as appears to us, to abridge such religious liberty, and having a tendency to deprive the lower classes of the community of those opportunities which they have so long enjoyed, to attend public worship and religious instruction under teachers of their own choice.

Resolved, That as deputed by large and respectable bodies of protestant dissenters to attend to their civil rights, it becomes our bounden duty immediately to protest against the principle of such a measure, and to point out the unjust and vexatious operation of the aforesaid bill, as now brought into parliament.

Resolved, That a petition against the said bill, grounded on the principles of the foregoing resolutions, be signed by the members of this meeting, and presented to the legislature.

Resolved, That the foregoing resolutions be signed by the chairman, and inserted in all the public papers.

WM. SMITH, Chairman.

LIBRARY, RED-CROSS STREET,

May 16, 1811.

At a numerous Meeting of the General Body of Protestant Dissenting Ministers of the three denominations, residing in and about the cities of London and Westminster, regularly summoned to deliberate on the means of opposing the bill introduced into the house of Lords by viscount Sidmouth, which has a tendency to narrow the provisions of the toleration act, the following resolutions were unanimously adopted :—

1. That the right of peaceably assembling for the purpose of religious worship and public instruction, according to the dictates of our own consciences, belongs to us as men, as Christians, and as members of civil society; that this right ought not to be abridged or controlled by any secular authority; and that we cannot consent to the alienation or surrender of

it without criminality on our part, disrespect to the memory of those from whom we have, under providence, received it, and injury to the best interests of our descendants and successors, to whom it is our duty, as far as we are able, to transmit it inviolate.

2. That this right has been recognized and maintained, from the revolution to the present day, partly by a liberal construction of the toleration act, and partly by the protection of the illustrious Princes of the house of Brunswick; and that it would betray a want of confidence in the favour of our sovereign, in the justice of the legislature, and in the spirit of the times, to submit to any proposed restrictions of this right in passive silence.

3. That as faithful and loyal subjects, attached to the civil constitution of our country, and desirous of contributing to that tranquillity and union on which its permanence and prosperity very much depend, we cannot forbear expressing our regret, that any measures should be proposed which have a tendency, by abridging our liberty as protestant dissenters, and restraining the exercise of social worship among those with whom we are connected, to excite dissatisfaction and discontent at the present interesting crisis; and more especially at a time when we had reason to hope that our liberty would have been enlarged, instead of being restrained; though we are peaceably waiting for the period in which this happy event shall take place, and penal laws no longer have any operation in the province of religion.

4. That the bill now introduced into the house of Lords appears to us inconsistent with the unmolested liberty which we have long thankfully enjoyed; repugnant to our principles and profession as protestant dissenters, who disavow the authority of the civil magistrate in the province of religion; and imposing restrictions which will be in various respects injurious and oppressive.

5. That it is our duty, on our own behalf, and on behalf of our brethren, as well as with a view to the cause of religious liberty in general, to make every constitutional effort in our power for preventing this bill from passing into a law; and that for this purpose a petition be presented from this body to the house of Peers.

DAN. TAYLOR, Chairman.